

## Division of Child Support Enforcement



### Paternity Establishment

#### **ISSUE STATEMENT:**

DCSE strives to promote stability, health, safety, and economic security for all children in need of support. One primary means of accomplishing this is by DCSE assuring that a parent who lives outside the primary residence of the child provides economic and medical support for the child. This hopefully will lead to an ongoing, nurturing relationship with the child since the non-custodial parent also has a critical emotional role in the upbringing of the child.

In Federal Fiscal Year 2004 (the most recent year for which data are available), the national average for percentage of paternity establishment was 85.0%, while Delaware's FFY 2004 rate was 74.1%. DCSE has been struggling to improve data reliability, which is a critical factor in achieving the required level of performance. Although DCSE's data were found to be unreliable in FFY 2001, 2002, and 2003, we were successful in passing the Data Reliability Audit for 2004. In September 2004, Delaware was awarded a Federal grant (1115 grant program) to improve its paternity establishment rate. A vendor, Policy Studies, Inc, was engaged to assist Delaware in identifying and overcoming barriers to improving the rate of paternity establishment. DCSE is in the process of implementing recommendations made by PSI and will dedicate resources to sustaining the improvements.

#### **GOAL:**

- ◆ All children in Delaware have parentage established

#### **KEY OBJECTIVE:**

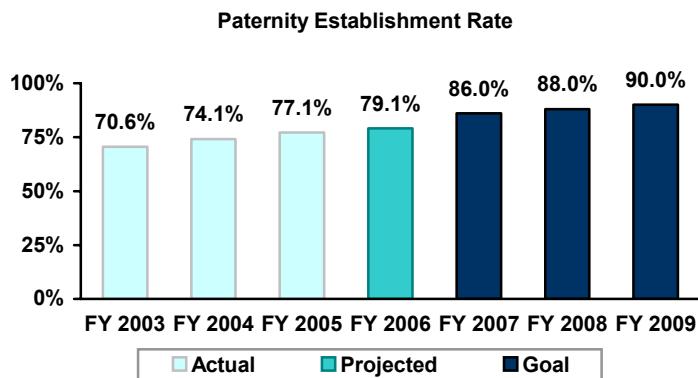
- ◆ To increase the establishment of paternities by each year, particularly those established within one year of birth, increasing from a projected 77.1% in FFY 2005 to a target of 90.0%, which is the Federal performance target, in FFY 2009.

#### **STRATEGIC INITIATIVES / ACTIVITIES:**

- ◆ Effective cooperation between DCSE and Family Court in obtaining court orders for paternity testing
- ◆ Extensive outreach by DCSE to hospitals, birthing facilities, other members of the medical community, including physicians and organizations statewide, which have contact with new parents, in order to increase participation in the agency's Voluntary Acknowledgement of Paternity program
- ◆ Reorganization and training of DCSE staff to promote more focused and effective casework, including reallocation of staff to 'order establishment'
- ◆ Enhanced 'parent locate'

## **PERFORMANCE MEASURE:**

- ◆ This performance measure is determined by using the Federal standard for performance, which is the ratio of the total number of children in the IV-D caseload at the end of the Federal fiscal year who have been born-out-of wedlock for whom paternity has been established or acknowledged, divided by the total number of children in the IV-D caseload at the end of the preceding fiscal year that were born out-of-wedlock.



**Please note:** Since the State and Federal fiscal years overlap, the targets are those that will be achieved by the end of the federal fiscal year.

## **MONITORING / EVALUATION PLANS:**

- ◆ Ongoing tracking by the DCSE Operations Unit of cases in which paternity testing has been court ordered, and follow up action to obtain a child support order when appropriate
- ◆ Implementation of a detailed DCSE performance report which will track performance at various levels within the agency on a variety of measures, including paternity establishment
- ◆ Frequent assessment of the number of Voluntary Acknowledgment of Paternities reported by Delaware hospitals, and issuance of updated brochures encouraging parent responsibility
- ◆ Formal evaluation of 1115 Grant activities by Penn State University

*Program Managers: Guy Perrotti, 326-6024 #127; Linda Murphy, 326-6024 #206; Gwen Anderson, 326-6024 #208*

## Establishment of Support Orders

### **ISSUE STATEMENT:**

DCSE's cases originate with an application for services by the custodial parent, either as a walk-in client or through mandatory participation because of the receipt of Temporary Aid to Needy families (TANF) benefits or Medicaid assistance. Child support collections commence when the Family Court has issued a child support order.

In FFY 2004 (the most recent year for which data are available), Delaware's rate of cases with established Child Support Orders was 72.1%, while the nationwide average is 74.4%. In the first nine months of FFY 2005, DCSE increased the order establishment rate to 74.0 %. DCSE expects to sustain this performance through the remainder of the fiscal year.

### **GOAL:**

- ◆ All children in cases in the IV-D (Title of the Social Security Act relating to Child Support and Establishment of Paternity) program have financial child support orders

### **KEY OBJECTIVE:**

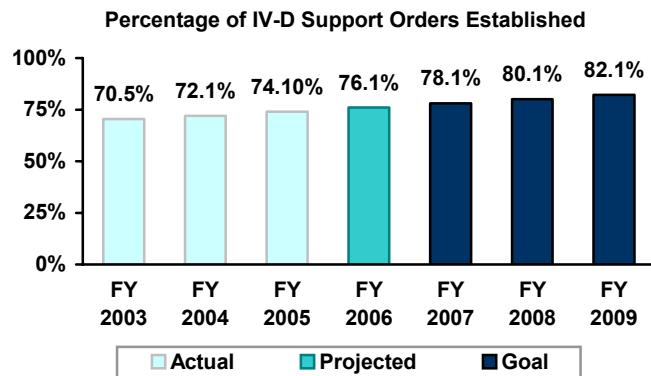
- ◆ To increase the percentage of IV-D cases with orders for financial child support by 2 percentage points per year, increasing from a projected 74.1% in FFY 2005 to a target of 82.1% in FFY 2009

### **STRATEGIC INITIATIVES / ACTIVITIES:**

- ◆ Improve expediency in processing a new child support case from the time an application for services has been received through the establishment of a child support order by Family Court
- ◆ Initiate prompt and effective Non-Custodial Parent Locate activities when necessary
- ◆ Increase the number of Deputy Attorneys General available to process petitions and represent IV-D clients in Court
- ◆ Establish a Quality Assurance Unit, to assure that federal timelines are met as well as to improve the quality of data and the quality and quantity of casework
- ◆ Reorganize and train DCSE staff to promote more focused and effective casework, including reallocation of staff to the order establishment/ intake process

## **PERFORMANCE MEASURE:**

- ◆ The percentage of IV-D cases with child support orders established



Please note: Since the State and Federal fiscal years overlap, the targets are those that will be achieved by the end of the federal fiscal year.

## **MONITORING / EVALUATION PLANS:**

- ◆ Continual monitoring by Child Support Specialists on cases where an order has not been promptly established
- ◆ Periodic evaluation by management and supervision of cases on which a child support order has not been established within ninety days after an application for Child Support Enforcement services has been filed
- ◆ Implementation of a detailed DCSE performance report which will track performance at various levels within the agency, on a variety of measures, including paternity establishment

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## Increasing Collections

### **ISSUE STATEMENT:**

In order for a child to have economic security, it is important for the non-custodial parent to pay the ordered amount of child support on a regular and timely basis. It is the role of DCSE to effectively initiate necessary enforcement measures against non-custodial parents who become delinquent in meeting their court ordered child support obligation(s).

In FFY 2004 (the most recent year for which data are available), the national average for percentage of current Child Support collected was 59.0%, while Delaware's FFY 2004 rate was 60.3%. DCSE should be able to continue to surpass the national average.

In FY 2004 (the most recent year for which data are available), the national average for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cases paying on their Child Support arrears was 59.9%, while Delaware's rate was 64.3%. DCSE should be able to continue to surpass the national average.

### **GOAL:**

- ◆ All children in child support enforcement (IV-D) cases receive financial support from parents as ordered

### **KEY OBJECTIVES:**

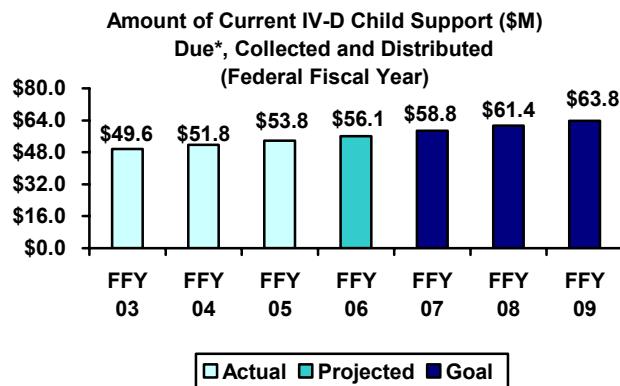
- ◆ To increase the IV-D Collection Rate on current support by 2 percentage points per year to a target of 69% in FFY 2009
- ◆ To maximize collections on child support cases whose payments are delinquent, increasing these collections by 2 percentage points per year to a target of 68.7% in FFY 2009
- ◆ To collect and process child support efficiently and economically, as evidenced by reaching a level of \$97 million dollars in total child support collections by FFY 2009; exchanging electronic payments with all 54 states and territories, as of FFY 2008; and collecting an average of \$329,000 in child support per each FTE in the Division, as of FFY 2009.

### **STRATEGIC INITIATIVES / ACTIVITIES:**

- ◆ Expediently establish automatic wage withholding orders against non-custodial parents (NCPs)
- ◆ Establish an early intervention process with NCPs to assure that they understand their obligation immediately after Court
- ◆ Conduct periodic special programs to encourage NCPs to resolve barriers to compliance and fulfill support obligations
- ◆ Issue payment notices to all NCPs as soon as a wage garnishment fails
- ◆ Efficiently utilize enhanced child support enforcement tools against NCPs who have become delinquent in meeting their child support obligation
- ◆ Update collection technology

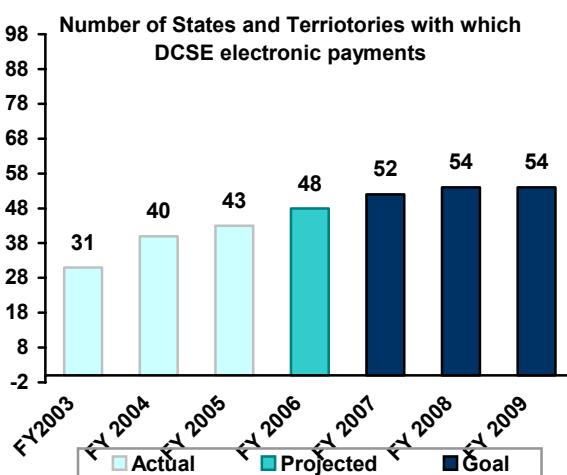
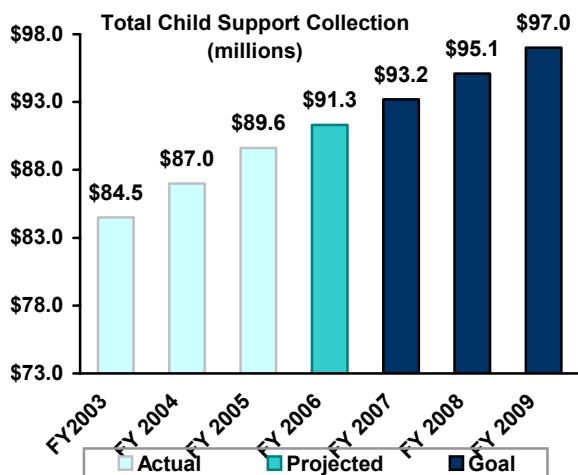
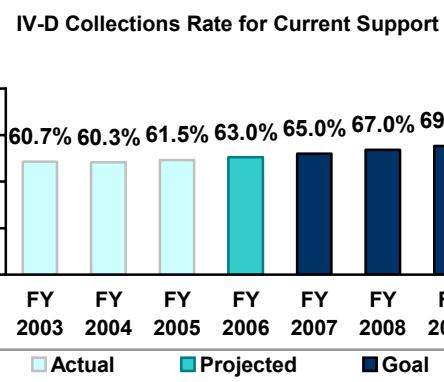
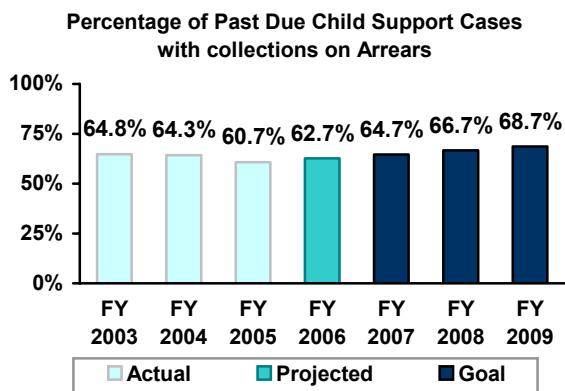
### **PERFORMANCE MEASURES:**

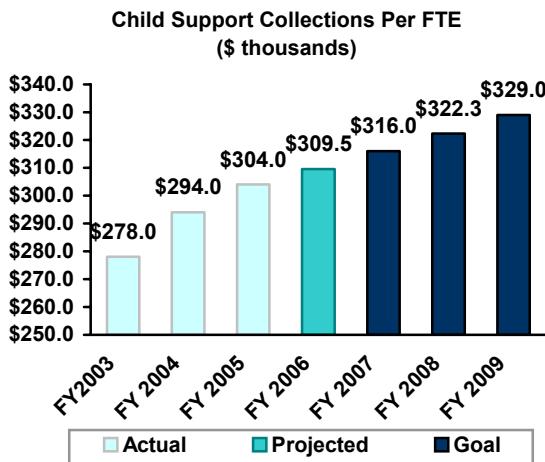
- ◆ Amount of IV- D current collected and distributed per the amount due.
- ◆ IV-D Collection Rate for current Child Support
- ◆ Percentage of past due Child Support cases with a Collection on Arrears
- ◆ Total Child Support Collections (millions)
- ◆ Collections per FTE
- ◆ Number of States and Territories with which DCSE Processes Electronic Payments



\* Amount due shown in table below

	FFY 03	FFY 04	FFY 05	FFY 06	FFY 07	FFY 08	FFY 09
Amount Due	\$81.8M	\$85.9M	\$87.5M	\$89.0M	\$90.5M	\$92.0M	\$92.5M
Amount Distributed	\$49.6M	\$51.8M	\$53.8M	\$56.1M	\$58.8M	\$61.4M	\$63.8M
DCSE	60.7%	60.3%	61.5%	63.0%	65.0%	67.0%	69.0%
Nationwide Average	58.0%	59.0%	60.0%	61.0%	62.0%	63.0%	64.0%





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#### **MONITORING / EVALUATION PLANS:**

- ◆ Frequent review and assessment by DCSE management of child support collections and related trends
- ◆ Promptly exercise management by exception when collection results do not meet expectations

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